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ABSTRACT

This study presents statistical information by state on the major languages being studied in secondary schools. Enrollments by language in Spanish, German, Italian, Russian, Latin, and Ancient Greek, and other modern foreign languages are illustrated in three charts. These include: (1) enrollments and percent 1958-62 (Grades 9-12); (2) percent of continuity, course 2 to 3; and (3) language enrollments and percent in secondary schools, grades 7-12, fall 1962. For a complete analysis of offerings and enrollments for fall 1961 and fall 1962, see ED 010 474. (RL)

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SECONDARY SCHOOL FOREIGN-LANGUAGE ENROLLMENTS AND OFFERINGS, 1958–62

JAMES N. ESHELMAN

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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SECONDARY SCHOOL FOREIGN-LANGUAGE ENROLLMENTS AND OFFERINGS, 1958-62

By James N. Eshelman

IN 1948, approximately one student out of seven in the public high schools was studying a modern foreign language; in 1962 the ratio was one to every four—2.4 million MFL enrollments in a total high school population of 9.8 million.[1] Contrary to popular belief, this gain began long before the launching of the first Sputnik startled the nation into a searching examination of its educational system, particularly in science and foreign language. There has, in fact, been an annual increase in the ratio of language enrollments to total high-school enrollment from 1948 to the present day, though the rate of increase rose sharply in 1959, after Sputnik and after the passage of the National Defense Education Act of 1958.

Between 1958 and 1962, MFL enrollments increased by 87%, more than tripling the 25% gain in high-school enrollment for the same period (see Chart 1 for details). Since some students study more than one language at a time, the figure representing total language enrollments is greater than the number of language students. In 1958, about one language student in thirty was studying more than one language.[2] As Chart 1 shows, the ratio of MFL enrollments to total high-school enrollment increased annually from 1948 to 1962. The difference in rate of increase in one year alone (1958–59) was more than in the preceding eleven years, presumably a result of NDEA. This rate of increase has remained high through 1962, though it was less each year.

Substantial gains in MFL enrollments were made in every state from 1958 to 1962. Enrollments more than quadrupled in Arkansas and Mississippi; more than tripled in Alabama, Alaska, Colorado, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Utah, and Wisconsin; and more than doubled in thirty other states. Although these increased enrollments are partly due to the increased high-school population, in nearly every state the ratio of MFL enrollment to total high-school enrollment was higher in 1962 than in 1958. Increases were not so dramatic in California, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, and Rhode Island, where foreign language programs were highly developed before 1958. Other states showing little change are North Carolina, South Carolina, Washington, and Wyoming.

In 1958 only seven states had an MFL enrollment which equaled at least one fourth of the total high-school enrollment; by 1962 twelve states plus the District of Columbia belonged in this category. In 1962 the states in descending order of ratio of MFL enrollment to total high-school enrollment (grades 7–12) were: 1) Connecticut, 51.8%; 2) New Jersey, 39.9%; 3) Massachusetts, 34.6%; 4) New York, 32.2%; 5) Rhode Island, 30.4%; 6) New Hampshire, 30.3%; 7) Arizona, 30.0%; 8) Vermont, 28.3%; 9) Delaware, 28.2%; 10) District of Columbia, 27.6%; 11) Maine, 26.1%; 12) California, 26.0%; 13) Maryland, 25.1%; 14) Colorado, 24.8%; 15) Alaska, 24.2%; 16) Pennsylvania, 23.8%; 17) Illinois, 20.6%; 18) Nevada, 20.2%; 19) New Mexico, 20.1%; 20) Texas, 20.1%; 21) Virginia, 19.7%; 22) North Carolina, 19.6%; 23) Florida, 18.9%; 24) Oregon, 17.8%; 25) Ohio, 17.6%; 26) Utah, 16.8%; 27) Wyoming, 16.4%; 28) Montana, 16.3%; 29) Wisconsin, 16.1%; 30) Washington, 15.3%; 31) Kansas, 14.6%; 32) Missouri, 14.0%; 33) Indiana, 12.8%; 34) Hawaii, 12.6%; 35) Nebraska, 12.2%; 36) Idaho, 11.9%; 37) Minnesota, 11.9%; 38) South Dakota, 11.6%; 39) Oklahoma, 11.5%; 40) Michigan, 11.4%; 41) Georgia, 10.9%; 42) Kentucky, 10.0%; 43) South Carolina, 10.0%; 44) Tennessee, 9.8%; 45) Louisiana, 9.4%; 46) West Virginia, 9.1%; 47) Arkansas, 7.0%; 48) North Dakota, 6.9%; 49) Iowa, 6.2%;

[1] The research reported here was performed pursuant to Contract No. OE 2-14-033 with the U. S. Office of Education, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. The complete report, *Foreign-Language Offerings and Enrollments in Secondary Schools, Public Schools: Fall 1961 and Fall 1962 and Nonpublic Schools: Fall 1962*, by James N. Eshelman and N. W. Lian, contains 101 pages and may be obtained from the MLA Materials Center for $1.50. See this report for exact figures from 1958 to 1962 and enrollments by states. For exact enrollment figures prior to 1958, see William R. Parker, *The National Interest and Foreign Languages*, U. S. National Commission for the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, third edition, 1961, also obtainable from the MLA Materials Center for $1.00.

[2] Esther M. Eaton: *Foreign Languages in Public Secondary Schools—Interim Report—A National Survey, Fall 1959*. U. S. Office of Education, 1963.

Chart 1. Enrollments and per cents 1958–62 (grades 9–12)

	Enrollments					% of Change					% of High-School Population					% of MFL Enrollment					% of FL Enrollment				
	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962	58–59	59–60	60–61	61–62	58–62	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962
HIGH-SCHOOL POPULATION	7,897,232	8,155,573	8,649,495	9,246,925	9,891,185	3.3	6.1	6.9	7.0	25.2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
French	479,769	603,733	744,404	908,082	1,118,097	25.8	23.3	22.0	12.1	112.2	6.1	7.4	8.6	9.8	10.3	37.0	38.6	39.9	41.4	42.1	25.1	27.4	29.5	31.4	32.3
German	93,054	123,581	150,764	184,820	213,425	32.8	22.0	22.6	15.5	129.4	1.2	1.5	1.7	2.0	2.2	7.2	7.9	8.1	8.4	8.9	4.9	5.6	6.0	6.4	6.8
Italian	22,133	21,118	20,026	22,277	22,060	−4.6	−5.2	11.2	−9.8	−0.3	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.7	1.4	1.1	1.0	0.9	1.2	1.0	0.8	0.8	0.7
Russian	4,055	7,513	9,607	13,224	16,029	85.3	27.9	37.6	21.2	295.3	0.05	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.5
Spanish	691,024	802,266	933,409	1,054,730	1,141,865	16.1	16.3	13.0	8.3	65.2	8.8	9.8	10.8	11.4	11.5	53.3	51.3	50.0	48.1	47.2	36.1	36.4	37.0	36.5	36.3
Other MFLs	5,909	6,672	9,148	9,074	7,423	12.9	37.1	−0.8	−18.2	25.6	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.5	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.2
TOTAL MFLs	1,295,944	1,564,883	1,867,358	2,192,207	2,418,899	20.7	19.3	17.4	10.3	86.7	16.4	19.2	21.6	23.7	24.4	—	—	—	—	—	67.7	71.0	74.0	75.9	76.8
Latin	617,500	639,776	654,670	695,297	728,637	3.6	2.3	6.2	4.8	18.0	7.8	7.8	7.6	7.5	7.4	—	—	—	—	—	32.3	29.0	26.0	24.1	23.1
Ancient Greek	—	225	222	83	144	—	−1.3	−62.6	73.5	—	—	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	—	—	—	—	—	—	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
TOTAL FLs	1,913,444	2,204,884	2,522,250	2,887,587	3,147,680	15.2	14.4	14.5	9.0	64.5	24.3	27.0	29.2	31.2	31.8	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

50) Alabama, 5.7%; and 51) Mississippi, 4.6%.

Enrollments by Language

French, German, Russian, Spanish, and Latin have shown an increase in enrollment every year from 1958 to 1962, with only Italian showing a decrease (see Chart 1 for per cents). The most dramatic increase was 86% in Russian from 1958 to 1959. Since then the per cent of change in Russian has been comparable to, though exceeding, that of other languages. The ratios of French, German, Russian, and Spanish enrollments to the total high-school population are higher each year and the ratios in Italian and Latin are progressively lower.

Spanish

Since the end of World War II, the highest foreign-language enrollment has been in Spanish. Spanish enrollments have increased each year, though at a lessening rate, to 1962 when they exceeded one million. From 1958 to 1962 they increased 65.2%. During that period enrollments more than quadrupled in Arkansas and Mississippi, more than tripled in Alabama, Utah, and Wisconsin, and more than doubled in twenty other states. The states with the smallest rates of increase were Iowa, Tennessee, Washington, and Wyoming.

The per cent of total high-school population enrolled in Spanish has increased annually since 1954. By 1962, 24% of the high-school population of Arizona studied Spanish and more than 10% of the student population studied Spanish in twelve states and the District of Columbia: New Jersey, New Mexico, Texas, California, Connecticut, Colorado, Alaska, Florida, New York, the District of Columbia, Delaware, Wyoming, and Illinois (in descending order).

While more than half the total MFL enrollment from 1948 to 1960 was in Spanish, each year since 1958 there has been a slight decrease in this numerical superiority, with a corresponding gain in French, German, and Russian. In six states the Spanish enrollment was more than two thirds of the total MFL enrollment: New Mexico, Texas, Arizona, Oklahoma, Florida, and Wyoming (in descending order). In thirteen other states (Idaho, Kansas, Nevada, California, Colorado, Alaska, Tennessee, Mississippi, Arkansas, Alabama, Missouri, Indiana, and South Dakota) more than half the MFL enrollment was in Spanish.

French

Between World Wars I and II French surpassed all other MFLs in enrollments. It has since occupied second place. From 1958 to 1962 French increased 112.2%, though each year showed a diminishing rate of increase. By 1962 enrollments in French exceeded a million. From 1958 to 1962 French enrollments increased more than five times in Arkansas, Colorado, and Mississippi; more than quadrupled in Alaska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, and Wisconsin; and in seventeen other states they more than tripled. They more than doubled in all other states except New Hampshire, North Carolina, Rhode Island, South Carolina, and Wyoming, and increases were significant even in these states.

The ratio of French enrollments to total high-school enrollments has been higher each year since 1958. In 1962 this ratio was highest in the six New England states, where more than 20% of the student population studied French. More than 10% studied French in seven other states and the District of Columbia: Maryland, New York, New Jersey, North Carolina, the District of Columbia, Delaware, Virginia, and Pennsylvania (in descending order).

The ratio of French to total MFL enrollments has risen annually since 1958. By 1962, 42% of the total MFL enrollment was in French as compared to 37% in 1958. In Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachussets, and South Carolina, the ratio of French enrollments to total MFL enrollments was over 75%. Over half the MFL students were enrolled in French in the District of Columbia and in North Carolina, Maryland, West Virginia, Rhode Island, Connecticut, Georgia, Virginia, and Louisiana (in descending order).

German

Before World War I German was the modern language most studied in the high schools. In 1915 the German enrollment was 324,000, more than twice the combined total of all other MFLs. By 1922 this enrollment had dropped to 13,000. A similar, though not so drastic, drop occurred during World War II when an enrollment of 135,000 in 1934 fell to 43,000 by 1948. A more sophisticated public was not so quick to equate the study of the enemy's language with partisanship. Since 1958 German has been second only to Russian in per cent of increase. In that time enrollments increased 129%, though, as with all other MFLs,

the rate of increase has lessened each year. Between 1958 and 1962 German enrollments increased in most states three times, five times, even twenty times. Only in Alaska, the District of Columbia, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Washington did enrollments fail to double.

A comparison of German enrollments with the total high-school population shows a persistent annual increase since 1958. In 1962 the ratio of German enrollments to the total high-school enrollment was highest in New Jersey, Minnesota, Delaware, Wisconsin, Montana, Utah, and South Dakota, in that order.

Each year since 1958 German has had a larger part of the total MFL enrollments, reaching 9% in 1962. In North Dakota more than a third of the MFL students were enrolled in German. The proportion was more than 10% in fifteen other states: Minnesota, South Dakota, Wisconsin, Montana, Utah, Washington, Nebraska, Iowa, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Idaho, Illinois, Kansas, and New Jersey (in descending order).

Italian

Except from 1960 to 1961, Italian enrollments have dropped at an increasing rate each year since 1958. Although fifteen states reported enrollments in Italian in 1962 (there were thirteen in 1958), seven of them showed marked decreases while the remaining six showed only slight increases. The ratio of Italian enrollment to the total high-school enrollment is lower each year and by 1962 the Italian enrollment was only 0.9% of the total MFL enrollment.

Russian

Of the five major modern foreign languages studied in high schools, Russian still has the smallest enrollment, but it increased nearly 300% from 1958 to 1962. In one year alone (1958–59) Russian enrollments increased 85%, presumably because of NDEA. In 1958 twenty-five states plus the District of Columbia reported Russian enrollments. By 1962 the number had risen to forty-three plus the District of Columbia. The only states with no Russian enrollment in 1962 were Alaska, Arkansas, Maine, Mississippi, New Hampshire, Vermont, and Wyoming.

The ratio of Russian enrollment to total high-school enrollment and to total MFL enrollment, though increasing every year, is low. In 1962 enrollments in Russian equaled only 0.2% of the total high-school population and only 0.7% of the total MFL enrollment.

Other modern foreign languages

Enrollments for 1962 in modern foreign languages other than those already mentioned were: Hebrew (4,472), Japanese (1,425), Polish (586), Portuguese (585), Chinese (309), Hawaiian (180), Norwegian (170), Swedish (97), Modern Greek (86), Arabic (79), and Czech (59). Though enrollments in these languages increased 26% from 1958 to 1962, they equal only about 0.1% of the total high-school population and about 0.4% of the total MFL enrollment.

In 1962 sixteen states reported enrollments in these other languages: California (Chinese), Connecticut (Hebrew), Hawaii (Chinese, Hawaiian, Japanese), Illinois (Chinese, Hebrew, Polish, Swedish), Massachusetts (Modern Greek, Hebrew, Polish, Portuguese), Michigan (Hebrew), Minnesota (Norwegian, Swedish), New Jersey (Chinese, Hebrew), New York (Chinese, Hebrew, Norwegian, Polish), Oregon (Polish), Pennsylvania (Hebrew, Japanese), Rhode Island (Portuguese), Texas (Czech), Utah (Arabic, Chinese, Japanese), Washington (Norwegian), and Wisconsin (Modern Greek, Polish).

Latin and Ancient Greek

Although most of the comparisons made so far in this report have been in terms of *modern* foreign languages, the role of Latin in the public secondary schools continues to be important. In 1962 Latin followed Spanish and French in number of enrollments. Until 1948 when Spanish took the lead, Latin always had the largest enrollment in foreign-language study. From 1934 until 1954 enrollments dropped, but they have since increased every year. From 1958 to 1962 there was an 18% increase, but in Alabama, Delaware, Idaho, Louisiana, Maryland, New Mexico, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and Wyoming, Latin enrollments declined. They more than quadrupled in Mississippi, but in no other state except Utah did they come close to doubling.

In 1962 Latin enrollments exceeded Spanish enrollments in thirteen states: Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, South Carolina, Tennessee, Vermont, and

West Virginia. They exceeded French enrollments in fifteen states; Arizona, Florida, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Mississippi, New Mexico, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, and Wyoming.

The ratio of Latin enrollments to total high-school population has decreased annually. In 1962 only five states had a Latin enrollment over 10% of the total high-school enrollment: Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Ohio, and Vermont (in descending order).

The per cent of the total foreign-language enrollment represented by Latin has steadily decreased from 1958 to 1962. In 1962 the states reporting a Latin enrollment over a third of the total foreign-language enrollment were: Ohio, Tennessee, Iowa, Indiana, Mississippi, Kentucky, North Dakota, and Wyoming (in descending order).

Enrollments in Ancient Greek decreased 46% from 1959 to 1962, and in 1962 only five states reported enrollments: Georgia (49), Massachusetts (40), Utah (30), Connecticut (15), and Indiana (10).

Language Enrollments in the 7th and 8th Grades

Differences in classification from state to state and from year to year have made the gathering of statistics at this level an extremely difficult task. The most reliable figures available show a jump from some 90,000 students in 1958 to over 350,000 in 1962.

In 1959 thirty-five states and the District of Columbia reported MFL enrollments in the 7th and 8th grades. By 1962 the number had risen to forty states and the District of Columbia. In 1959 only five states reported five-year MFL sequences, but by 1962 twenty states offered a five-year sequence in at least one MFL, and five states offered a sixth year. The highest enrollments in 7th and 8th grade language courses are in French and Spanish.

Offerings

In 1954, 43.6% of the high schools offered at least one modern foreign language. By 1958 this figure was 50.5% and in 1959, 60%. Again we see that in one year (1958–59) a gain was made that surpassed the total gain made over a period of years prior to the National Defense Education Act. By 1962 this figure had risen to 67.8%. In 1958 less than half the high schools in seventeen of the thirty-eight states surveyed offered a modern foreign language. In 1962 only five states remained in this category.

The gains were made principally in states where a generally low per cent of the high schools offered modern foreign languages in 1958. Although three states and the District of Columbia reported in 1958 that every high school offered at least one modern foreign language, only one did so in 1962. In sixteen states plus the District of Columbia in 1958 and in seventeen states plus the District of Columbia in 1962, over 75% of the high schools offered at least one modern foreign language.

Continuity

Chart 2 compares per cents of continuity from Course II to Course III in each language from 1958 to 1962. Each year a higher per cent of language students as a whole continue their study into the third year.

The highest per cent of continuity from Course II to Course III in modern foreign languages was in Colorado (62.7%). Other states in which more than one third of the

Chart 2. Per Cents of Continuity, Course II to Course III

	French	German	Russian	Spanish	Other MFLs	MFLs	Latin and Ancient Greek	FLs
1958–59	33.8	29.0	34.5	24.8	—*	25.7	17.4	22.6
1959–60	31.4	28.4	27.4	28.5	—*	29.6	14.6	24.6
1960–61	34.8	29.9	29.6	28.2	44.3	30.9	17.0	27.6
1961–62	35.4	32.4	44.0	31.5	36.8	33.3	17.4	29.5

* Continuity studies were not made in "other" languages for 1958–59 and 1959–60.

Chart 3. Language enrollments and per cents in secondary schools, grades 7–12, fall 1962

	Enrollments				% of Student Population				% of MFLs				% of FLs			
	Public (P)	Independent (I)	Catholic (C)	Total Secondary Schools (T)	P	I	C	T	P	I	C	T	P	I	C	T
Student Population	14,172,358	232,676	937,484	15,362,518	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
French	1,183,741	73,546	194,496	1,453,783	8.4	31.6	20.3	9.5	42.8	58.0	54.1	44.7	33.7	41.9	26.7	32.8
German	232,780	10,709	18,729	262,218	1.6	4.6	2.0	1.7	8.4	8.4	5.2	8.0	6.6	6.1	2.6	5.9
Russian	17,400	1,110	1,534	20,044	0.1	0.5	0.2	0.1	0.6	0.8	0.4	0.6	0.5	0.6	0.2	0.4
Spanish	1,299,758	33,218	137,981	1,470,957	9.2	14.3	14.4	9.6	46.9	26.2	38.4	45.2	36.9	18.9	18.9	33.2
Other MFLs	33,825	8,159	6,462	48,466	0.2	3.5	0.7	0.3	1.2	6.4	1.8	1.5	1.0	4.6	0.9	1.1
MFLs	2,769,504	126,742	359,202	3,255,448	19.5	54.5	37.5	21.2	—	—	—	—	78.6	72.2	49.3	73.5
Latin and Ancient Greek	752,737	48,796*	369,900	1,171,433	5.3	21.0	38.6	7.6	—	—	—	—	21.4	27.8	50.7	26.5
FLs	3,522,241	175,538	729,102	4,426,881	24.8	75.4	76.1	28.8	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

* Includes 5 students of Aramaic.

Course II modern-language students continued into Course III were Delaware (58.1%), Connecticut (52.5%), New York (48.5%), Rhode Island (39.5%), New Hampshire (38.8%), Maine (38.7%), New Jersey (38.1%), Vermont (38.1%), California (34.6%), Maryland (33.9%), and Virginia (33.9%).

Enrollments in Non-public Secondary Schools Contrasted with Enrollments in Public Secondary Schools

Surveys of secondary-school enrollments in 1962 show a great difference in language emphasis in each of the three categories surveyed: public schools, Catholic schools, and other non-public (independent) schools. Chart 3 shows these differences.

Modern-language enrollments are a much higher per cent of the student population in the non-public schools, particularly in the "independent" schools. Spanish clearly has the dominant enrollment in public schools, but French has the highest per cent in the "independent" schools and Latin in the Catholic schools, where its enrollment equals half of all foreign-language enrollments.